

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-07 L-03 /051 W

----- 103777

R 061848Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 89

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 7421

E O 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT CO SP

SUBJ: NEW COLOMBIAN AMB TO SPAIN

1. BELISARIO BETANCUR CUARTAS WAS NAMED COLOMBIAN AMB TO SPAIN ON AUG 4. HE IS EXPECTED ARRIVE IN MADRID AT END OF MONTH. PRESS REPORTS THAT HIS TWO MAJOR TASKS IN MADRID WILL BE RENEGOTIATION OF COLOMBO-SPANISH TRADE AGREEMENT AND INITIATION OF CONTACTS WITH THE ARAB EMIRATES WITH THE AIM OF EVENTUALLY ESTABLISHING DIP AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS.

2. FIFTY TWO YEAR OLD BETANCUR IS A WELL KNOWN "PROGRESSIVE" CONSERVATIVE WHO RAN FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN 70 AS AN OPPOSITION CONSERVATIVE. HE IS A LAWYER FROM THE LEADING INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEPT OF ANTIOQUIA. BETANCUR SERVED AS MIN OF LAB UNDER CONSERVATIVE PRES VALENCIA IN THE EARLY 60'S AND AS ADVISOR FOR LABOR AFFAIRS UNDER LIBERAL PRES LLERAS IN THE LATE 60'S. HE IS THE FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE PUBLISHING HOUSE, EDITORIAL TERCER MUNDO. MOST RECENTLY HE HAS HELD THE POSITION OF PRES OF THE NATIONAL ASSOC OF FINAN INSTITUTIONS (ANIF), A PRIVATE RESEARCH LOBBYING ORG WHICH PROVIDES A VARIETY OF SERVICES TO MEMBERS AND OFFERS STUDIES ON CURRENT ISSUES TO THE GOVT.

BETANCUR IS REPORTED TO HAVE BUSINESS INTERESTS IN SPAIN WHICH INCLUDE EXPORTS TO COLOMBIA AND LEGAL ADVISORY SERVICES TO SPANISH FIRMS DOING BUSINESS WITH COLOMBIA. BETANCUR IS OPEN AND FRIENDLY WITH US OFFICIALS BUT HAS OFTEN BEEN CRITICAL OF US POLICY
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AND ACTIONS IN THE PAST. THE NEW AMB IS MARRIED TO ROSA ELENA

ALVAREZ AND HAS THREE CHILDREN, BEATRIZ AND MARIA CLARA,
BOTH MARRIED AND DIEGO.

3. COMMENT: BETANCUR REMAINS ACTIVE IN NATIONAL POLITICS AND IS
VIEWED AS THE PRINCIPAL LEADER OF THE MODERATE OR "PROGRESSIVE"
WING OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. THOUGH THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION IS THREE YEARS HENCE, HE IS ALREADY CONSIDERED A POSSIBLE
CANDIDATE DESPITE HIS OWN DISCLAIMERS. THE ASSIGNMENT IN MADRID
COULD PROVIDE HIM WITH SOME NECESSARY CREDENTIALS IN FORN AFFAIRS
SHOULD HE DECIDE TO SEEK NOMINATION. IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT
BETANCUR'S TOUR IN SPAIN WILL BE A SHORT ONE TO PREVENT HIS LOSS
OF INFLUENCE ON THE LOCAL POLIT SCENE. END COMMENT.

4. ADDITIONAL BIO INFO BEING POUCHED TO MADRID. VAKY

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TAGS: PINT, PDIP, CO, SP, (BETANCUR CUARTAS, BELISARIO)
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